IN THE CLAIMS:

A complete list of the pending claims follows:

Claims 1 – 14 (cancelled).

15. (original) A method of assembling an objective lens and an optical assembly of an optical head comprising:

positioning the objective lens and the optical assembly adjacent to each other, wherein the optical assembly comprises a forward sense element (FSE);

adjusting a position of the objective lens with respect to the optical assembly until the objective lens and the FSE are in optical communication with each other;

rigidly connecting the objective lens and the optical assembly while the objective lens and the FSE are in optical communication with each other.

16. (new) A method of assembling a lens assembly and an optical prism assembly of an optical head comprising:

adjusting a position of the optical prism assembly with respect to the lens assembly in response to viewing the position of the optical prism assembly through an objective lens of the lens assembly, the position adjustment being effective to optically align the optical prism assembly with respect to the lens assembly; and

rigidly connecting the aligned lens assembly and optical prism assembly.

17. (new) The method of claim 16, wherein the optical prism assembly includes a substantially circular element, the aligning act comprising viewing the circular element through the objective lens and adjusting the relative position of the optical prism assembly until the circular element is optically concentric with the objective lens.

18. (new) The method of claim 17, wherein the substantially circular element is a forward sense element.

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19. (new) The method of claim 16, further comprising:

providing a substrate having alignment marks;

aligning a laser diode with the alignment marks; and

rigidly connecting the aligned laser diode to the substrate.

20. (new) The method of claim 19, wherein rigidly connecting the aligned laser diode to the substrate comprises applying a silver-based adhesive.

21. (new) The method of claim 19, wherein the aligned laser diode rigidly connects to the substrate through a laser diode mount.

22. (new) The method of claim 19, further comprising:

positioning the substrate with the rigidly-connected laser diode adjacent the optical prism assembly;

powering the rigidly-connected laser diode to generate a laser beam;

aligning the substrate to the optical prism assembly responsive to viewing the laser beam through the objective lens of the optical assembly; and

rigidly connecting the aligned substrate to the optical prism assembly.

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